

Increase in the divorce rates in Slovakia, rural - urban differences.

(Abstract of a poster)

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Political changes in 1989 and 1990 in Eastern Europe have released in those countries also demographical changes typical for the Second demographic transition. The decline of stability of marriage, as well as increase in the divorce rates in general, belongs among them.

Before 1990, Slovakia belonged among the European countries with relative high marriage and low divorce rates. In particular, crude marriage rate kept up for a long period at 7 per mille with the mean age at first marriage 24.5 for men and 22 for women. On the other hand, the crude divorce rate grew slowly to 1.5 per mille and the divorce ratio to 22 % in 1990.

Nowadays, Slovakia belongs among the European average from this aspect. In 1990's the crude marriage rate fell and then has fluctuated at values about 4.8 per mille. Now, the mean age at first marriage is about 29 and 26.5, respectively, and continues to grow. However, although the number of new marriages is less, the number of divorces grows both in absolute and relative figures. The crude divorce rate has been 2.4 per mille and the divorce ratio has doubled to 46 %. The aim of the paper is to investigate more details about this increase.

In the past, marriages in Slovakian rural areas were traditionally more stable. Since 1990, it has been changed. This paper (based on official data) shows, how the divorce rates have developed in rural and urban areas and how rapid their growth is in the country. This reflects the present convergence processes between towns and villages, including suburbanization. Thus, it may be said that one of the main causes of increasing occurrence of divorces is the lessening of differences between town and village.

Another indicator of stability is the duration of the marriage. Nowadays, the risk of dissolution is growing for all ages but more for the older marriages, what results in increasing mean marriage duration. The risk of marriage dissolution was higher in urban regions for any duration of marriage, now it is rising, but in rural areas more rapidly as in urban ones.

The paper deals with other risk factors, too, as the marriage age and the probability of divorce within the first 10 years after marriage. However, in the old patterns in Slovakia, the probability of divorce was minimal for young adult partners, particularly for brides aged 19-22 and grooms aged 21-25, i.e. in the modal marriage ages. For this reason, the postponing the wedding onto higher age could not decrease the divorce rate. As the recent studies show, the probability of divorce is changing, too. It has grown most radically for the young adults, e.g. for those age groups, for which it was very low in the past. The risk of divorce grew at most for the mental cohort of those, who matured after 1990. If it is true, then in the future the risk of divorce could grow for further ages, as well.